

Message Text

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UNCLAS BELFAST 338

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TAGS: PINT, UK, EI

SUBJECT: OFFICIAL UNIONISTS REQUEST ELECTION

REF: (A) DUBLIN 1930 (NOTAL) (B) BELFAST 314

1. IRISH TIMES HAS CARRIED OFFICIAL UNIONIST PROPOSALS PUT FORWARD IN INTER-PARTY TALKS WITH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC AND LABOUR PARTY (SDLP). THESE PROPOSALS WERE:

(A) MAIN PRINCIPLES OF CONVENTION REPORT BE ACCEPTED,

(B) NORTHERN IRELAND TO HAVE SAME REPRESENTATION IN EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AS SCOTLAND WITH AT LEAST THREE MEMBERS TO BE ELECTED FROM NORTH,

(C) NORTHERN IRELAND TO BE GIVEN INCREASED REPRESENTATION AT WESTMINSTER PARLIAMENT,

(D) CABINET TO BE FORMED ON NORMAL BRITISH/IRISH PRACTICE,

(E) COUNCIL OF STATE AND BACK-BENCH COMMITTEE SYSTEM TO SERVE AS DOUBLE CHECK ON EXECUTIVE. THE COUNCIL OF STATE TO HAVE STATUS OF PRIVY COUNCIL AND BE APPOINTED BY A GOVERNOR OR NOMINATION OF PARLIAMENT BY PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. THIS COUNCIL WOULD HAVE MONITORING FUNCTION ON PUBLIC BUSINESS WITH POWER TO DELAY LEGISLATION FOR A YEAR. IT WOULD ALSO HAVE EXECUTIVE RESPONSIBILITY IN THE FIELD OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND RELATED SECURITY MATTERS.

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2. AT PRESS CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 17 HARRY WEST, LEADER OF OFFICIAL UNIONISTS, ANNOUNCED DISPATCH OF LETTER TO PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN ASKING FOR ELECTION IN NORTHERN IRELAND ON BASIS OF CONVENTION REPORT. THIS IS NOT RPT NOT TO BE A REFERENDUM ON REPORT BUT IS FOR ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO A NORTHERN IRELAND PARLIAMENT BY PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION. IF LOYALISTS SHOULD LOSE, THEY HAVE PLEDGED THEY WOULD FORM LOYAL OPPOSITION AND PARTICIPATE FULLY IN POLITICAL PROCESSES.

3. THERE WAS ATTEMPT IN EARLY JULY BY OFFICIAL UNIONISTS TO GET REACTION FROM HMG TO RESULTS DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN OFFICIAL UNIONISTS AND SDLP. THIS APPROACH WAS MADE INFORMALLY AT LOW LEVEL AND NO REACTION WAS FORTHCOMING. OFFICIAL UNIONISTS DO NOT RPT NOT EXPECT PM TO AGREE TO ELECTION NOW. THEY DO HOPE HE WILL TAKE INITIATIVE TO CALL AND CHAIR MEETING OF LEADERS ALL POLITICAL PARTIES, PREFERABLY OUTSIDE PROVINCE, TO DISCUSS TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR FURTHER NEGOTIATIONS. OFFICIAL UNIONISTS ARE PRESENTING CASE THAT ALL POLITICAL PARTIES AGREE ON NECESSITY OBTAIN DEVOLVED GOVERNMENT SOON AND THAT MAJORITY OF POPULATION BACKS CONVENTION REPORT. OFFICIAL UNIONISTS BELIEVE LESS MODERATE WING OF UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST COALITION REPRESENTED BY UNITED ULSTER UNIONIST MOVEMENT (BAIRD) AND DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY (PAISLEY) HAS LOST MOMENTUM AND THAT OFFICIAL UNIONISTS RELATIVELY SECURE IN SPEAKING FOR MAJORITY COMMUNITY. FOR EXAMPLE THEY EXPECT NO OPPOSITION FROM WITHIN COALITION TO WESTMINSTER CANDIDACY ENOCH POWELL AT NEXT GENERAL ELECTION. THEY STILL WILL NOT CONTEMPLATE ANY SYSTEM OF INSTITUTIONALIZED "POWER SHARING" AT CABINET LEVEL BUT THEY BELIEVE COUNCIL OF STATE PROPOSAL COULD SERVE AS BASIS NEGOTIATIONS WITH SDLP IF PRIME MINISTER WOULD ENCOURAGE DISCUSSION THIS PROPOSAL. THE OFFICIAL UNIONISTS SHARE WITH THE SDLP A BELIEF THAT THE PROVISIONAL IRA WILL DO ALL IT CAN TO PREVENT PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN NORTHERN IRELAND AND PREDICT THAT, IF POLITICAL AGREEMENT LOOKED LIKELY, PROVISIONALS WOULD LAUNCH UNPRECEDENTED CAMPAIGN OF VIOLENCE.

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